



California's Marine Invasive Species Program

California State Lands Commission, Marine Facilities Division



Our Mission

Prevent or minimize the release of nonindigenous species (NIS) to California waters from commercial ships

What are Nonindigenous Species (NIS)?

NIS may be plants, animals or micro-organisms (bacteria or viruses) that are moved to regions where they did not occur historically. Because these organisms are often moved accidentally along with the globe-trotting movement of people and goods, they may also be called “biological hitchhikers”.

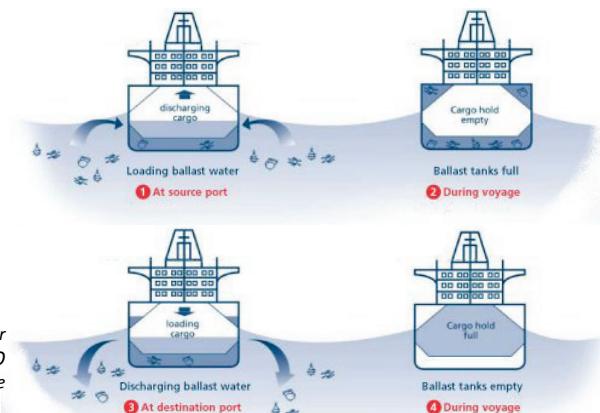
How Commercial Ships Move Nonindigenous Species

Ballast Water

Vessels take on ballast water to adjust weight for stability in rough seas, to navigate through shallow waterways, or to pass under bridges. Ballast water that is taken up in one port, then discharged in another port can contain thousands of organisms that may gain a foothold in a new location.



From: “Ballast Water Stowaways” poster produced by the GEF/UNDP/IMO Globallast Programme



Vessel Fouling

Some organisms attach to hard surfaces that are underwater, including the bottoms and sides of ships. These “fouling” organisms can be moved along with vessels to new places where they can be introduced.

Marine Invasive Species Program Activities

- Work with the shipping industry, scientists, legislators, environmental organizations, and other state and federal agencies to develop science-based strategies to reduce the release of nonindigenous organisms through commercial ships
- Collaborate on research that improves enforcement techniques, develops better management tools, and informs policy actions.
- Encourage the development of new technologies to prevent the introduction of species, including technologies to treat ballast water
- Educate the shipping industry and the general public on the importance of preventing NIS introductions

